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## Discovery of Larvae and Natural Foodplant of Least Carpet, *Idaea vulpinaria* Herrich-Schäffer (*rusticata* sensu auct.) (Lep. : Geometridae)

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Having previously associated this species in north-west Kent with common elm (*Ulmus campestris* L.) and with that alone, although to my knowledge the larva has never actually been found feeding upon it, I was interested in July 1972 to find in a very restricted location at Bexleyheath, Kent, the moths on many occasions settled upon a wall far removed from any elm. Subsequently I noticed freshly emerged specimens drying their wings there, and so realised that the locality must support a colony attached to something other than elm. As there were half a dozen isolated and neglected plants of *Alyssum saxatile* L. growing there, I suspected this might be the food-plant, and so during the summer of 1973 examined these carefully on several occasions, first for eggs and later for larvae, but without success.

In May this year, I made a number of further unsuccessful daylight searches. However, on 17th May, I visited the locality after dark and with the aid of a torch, searched the flowers and leaves, but again without success. I then examined the considerable accumulation of dirt and dead leaves beneath the clumps and still finding no larvae, as a last resort shook some of the debris over a newspaper. Examination of this revealed an abundance of small spiders and two small

Geometrid larvae. Then, by carefully lifting the foliage and searching debris beneath the plants, I discovered over a dozen more larvae several of which I took. These duly pupated and the first *I. vulpinaria* emerged on 16th June, when incidentally I noticed the first feral moths of the season on the wall beside the plants.

Although larvae were not observed eating dead or withered leaves, I found two on partly eaten withered foliage, and the larvae in captivity completed their growth on this. Later, I found eggs at Bexleyheath attached singly and insecurely to debris within the clumps of *A. saxatile*.

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that the moths are to be found only in the vicinity of *Alyssum*. Similar clumps of catmint (*Nepeta* sp.) and perennial rock cress (*Arabis* sp.) do not have *S. vulpinaria* resting on their adjacent walls.

## Grote in Hildesheim

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In a recent brief biography of Augustus Radcliffe Grote, the distinguished nineteenth-century American lepidopterist (Wilkinson, 1971), I was able to furnish little new information concerning the least documented period of Grote's life, his residence in Hildesheim, Germany, from 1895 until his death in 1903. A recent opportunity to examine German sources as well as a complete set of the publications of the Roemer-Museum (Hildesheim) has revealed some pertinent additional facts about the last years of that controversial entomologist who was called by his contemporary Tutt (1903) "the best loved and best hated lepidopterist in America".

Grote emigrated to Germany in 1884, after selling his famous collection of American Lepidoptera to the British Museum. Upon taking up residence in Bremen, he eventually married his second wife, Gesa Maria Ruyter, daughter of a wealthy tobacco merchant. His faltering financial condition revived, Grote was once again able to devote himself to entomological pursuits (Wilkinson, 1971). After a long and productive residence in Bremen, at least regarding publication, Grote moved to the nearby town of Hildesheim.

Our chief sources for this little-known end to Grote's amazingly productive life have been his few obituaries, such as Tutt's, which explained that "his reawakening of the sleepy museum at Hildesheim, to which he attached himself as an honorary helper some few years ago, is fresh in the memory of all of us, and there must be few British lepidopterists worthy of the name who are not familiar with the quarto brochures that have issued thence of late years" (Tutt, 1903). Grote's German friend Wilhelm Bode explained that ". . . seit 1895 bewohnte er Hildesheim und war bis zu seinem am 12. September v. Js. erfolgten Tode